

**ABSTRACT****MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICATION NETWORKS**

5           A communication network having a plurality of ports modelled according to a  
layer protocol and partitioned into a plurality of subnetworks, is managed by a net-  
work management system that generates, in respect of a subnetwork, an off-network  
pointer exiting the subnetwork at one of the ports. This enables a traffic carrying ca-  
pability to be built up externally to the subnetwork. The off-network pointer can be  
10       used to derive other implied off-network pointers at logical layers/protocols internally  
in the network and potentially on different network devices. The management system  
can also establish connections between connection termination points at the edges of  
partitions and can identify stranded bandwidth in order to release it and to enable  
trails to be built up piecemeal.

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